

CLASSIFIED MESSAGE

Approved For Release 2001/04/17 : CIA-RDP71B00590R000100090005-2

SECRET

MSG  
UNIT  
EXT  
DATE

ROUTING

ROUTING	
1	9
2	10
3	11
4	12
5	13
6	14
7	15
8	16

DEFERRED	PRIORITY	INITIALS
ROUTINE	OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE	INITIALS

TO :  
FROM :  
CONF :  
INFO :

CHIEF  
D/CHIEF  
CIC  
PLANS

HOLD FOR:  
T.H.  
FILE

CONTACT INFO

*Handwritten initials and marks*

OSA 1-20 D

IN 99245

25X1A

TO CITE

SECRET 110055Z CITE

25X1A

25X1A

OXCAR/INTEL

THIS IS A 25X1A

EXTRACTED FROM LAS VEGAS SUN, DATED 8 JAN 67.

HEADLINES - DOWNED SPY PLANE LOCATED - SUB HEADLINES - MYSTERY  
IN FATE OF PILOT. \*HOPES THAT THE PILOT OF A 2000 MILE PER HOUR  
SR-71 SUPER SPY PLANE MAY HAVE PARACHUTED TO SAFETY SPURRED SEARCH  
TEAMS YESTERDAY, COMBING DESOLATE TERRAIN NORTHEAST OF HERE. THE  
PILOT WAS IDENTIFIED AS WALTER L. RAY, 33, 7900 FARRLAIN AVE.,  
CANOGA PARK, CALIF. A SPOKESMAN AT EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE IN  
CALIFORNIA'S MOJAVE DESERT SAID IN A TERSE STATEMENT EARLIER THAT  
THE WRECKAGE OF THE MISSING STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE PLANE WAS  
LOCATED LATE FRIDAY, ABOUT 86 MILES NORTHEAST OF LAS VEGAS NEAR  
LEITH. THE SR-71, THE WORLD'S FASTEST OPERATIONAL AIRCRAFT AND  
SUCCESSOR TO THE U2 SPY PLANE, CRASHED THURSDAY WHILE ON A ROUTINE  
TEST FLIGHT OVER TERRAIN MARKED BY MESQUITE-COVERED ROLLING HILLS.

THE AIR FORCE NEITHER DENIED NOR CONFIRMED THE POSSIBILITY THE

SECRET

RELEASING OFFICER

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

AUTHENTICATING OFFICER

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CIVILIAN PILOT WAS STILL ALIVE, BUT REPORTS FROM A CREW WHICH EXAMINED THE WRECKAGE INDICATED HE WAS NOT ABOARD WHEN THE PLANE CRASHED. LOADED WITH THE LATEST ELECTRONIC RECONNAISSANCE EQUIPMENT THE SR-71 CAN, AT MAXIMUM CAPABILITIES, SURVEY 60,000 SQUARE MILES OF TERRAIN FOR EACH HOUR OF OPERATION. THE TOWN OF LEITH, IN REALITY AN ABANDONED UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD SECTION STATION, IS LOCATED ABOUT 90 MILES NORTHEAST OF THIS GAMBLING CAPITAL. THE SR-71, MADE BY LOCKHEED, IS THE WORLD'S FASTEST OPERATIONAL PLANE. IT WAS FLOWN BY A COMPANY TEST PILOT. THE SR-71, POWERED BY TWO HUGE JET ENGINES, IS A MORE SOPHISTICATED AND ADVANCED SPY PLANE THE U2 MODEL IN WHICH AMERICAN PILOT GARY FRANCIS POWERS WAS SHOT DOWN OVER RUSSIA IN 1960. IN 1965, A YEAR AFTER IT MADE ITS FIRST FLIGHT FROM PALMDALE, CALIF., THE SR-71 BECAME OPERATIONAL WITH THE STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND AT BEALE AFB IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA. AS STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE PLANE, IT HAS A TOP SPEED OF MACH 3 (THREE TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND), AND A TOP ALTITUDE OF MORE THAN 80,000 FEET. PRESIDENT JOHNSON ANNOUNCED JULY 24, 1964, THAT THE AIRCRAFT WAS "CAPABLE OF WORLDWIDE RECONNAISSANCE," HE SAID IT WOULD BE USED "DURING PERIODS OF MILITARY HOSTILITIES AND IN OTHER SITUATIONS IN WHICH THE UNITED STATES MILITARY FORCES MAY BE CONFRONTING FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES." FLYING AT MAXIMUM CAPABILITIES, THE SR-71 CAN SURVEY 60,000 SQUARE MILES OF LAND OR OCEAN IN EACH HOUR OF OPERATION. IT IS EQUIPPED WITH THE LATEST ELECTRONIC RECONNAISSANCE EQUIPMENT. ONE OTHER SR-71 HAS CRASHED.

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IN FEBRUARY OF LAST YEAR, TWO LOCKHEED CREWMAN EJECTED OVER NEW MEXICO DURING AN UNDISCLOSED AIR EMERGENCY. ONE OF THE CIVILIAN TEST PILOTS, JAMES T. ZAWYER OF LANCASTER, CALIF., BAILED OUT AND WAS KILLED. WILLIAM A. WEAVER, NORTHRIDGE, CALIF., SURVIVIED THE JUMP. THE SR-71 WAS DEVELOPED FROM THE YF-12A TRIPLE-SONIC INTERCEPTOR. THE TWO PLANES ARE NEARLY IDENTICAL, INCORPORATING A DOUBLE-DELTA WING DESIGN. A MEASURE OF THE SR-71'S PERFORMANCE IS SEEN IN THE FOUR WORLD SPEED AND ALTITUDE RECORDS SET BY THE YF12A IN A SINGLE DAY AT EDWARDS AFB IN MAY, 1965.

S E C R E T TOR 110146Z JAN 67

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